

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 IO-13 CU-02 SY-05

A-01 OPR-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 EUR-12 SSO-00 DHA-02 OC-06

CCO-00 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USSS-00 /104 W
----- 009857

P 071410Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5423

IPV RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 6137

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 0999

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, SF

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO CAPE TOWN RIOTS -EXCESSIVE POLPAO
VIOLENCE ALLEGED

REF: CAPE TOWN 0995

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY:

THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND (SEPT 4) WAS COMPARATIVELY
CALM IN CAPE TOWN AREA. FOUR SCHOOLS IN CAPE FLATS AREA
AND ONE AT GENADENDAL WERE REPORTED DAMAGED BY FIRES
YATURDAY AND SUNDAY. ARSON ATTEMPTS AT ATHLONE LIBRARY
AND MAGISTRATES COURT BUILDING WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. THERE
ARE INCREASING CHARGES OF EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE BY POLICE
IN DEALING WITH DEMONSTRATORS. END SUMMARY

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1. THERE WAS A LULL IN DEMONSTRATIONS AND DISORDERS IN

CAPE TOWN AREA OVER HOLIDAY WEEKEND (SEPT 4-6) WITH ONLY SCATTERED ARSON ATTEMPTS REPORTED. MANY OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, FEAR RESUMPTION OF PROTEST ACTIVITIES BY STUDENTS TODAY (SEPT 7).

2. IN MEANTIME, OPPOSITION GROUPS HAVE BLAMED GOVERNMENT FOR CAUSIV CRISIS AND THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS CHARGES OF EXCESSIVE FORCE BY POLICE. (COLORED) LABOR PARTY ISSUED STATEMENT DENOUNCING APARTHEID AND BLAMING GOVERNMENT FOR PRESENT "CRISIS." STATEMENT CALLED FOR CONVENING OF NATIONAL CONVENTION OF ALL PEOPLES OF SOUTH AFRICA TO ADOPT NEW CONSTITUTION AND RELEASE OF PARTY'S NATIONAL CHAIRMAN REV. H. J. HENRICKSE (DETAINED BY POLICE AUG 26 - CAPE TOWN 966) AND ALL OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS AND DETAINEES. REFERRING TO REPORTED DEATHS OF DETAINEES WHILE IN POLICE CUSTODY IN PAST FEW YEARS STATEMENTSTATED RECENT CASE OF LUKE MAZWEMBA, MEMBER OF WESTERN PROVINCE ADVICE WORKERS BUREAU, WHO REPORTEDLY COMMITTED SUICIDE BY HANGING WITHIN TWO HOURS OF BEING ARRESTED. STATEMENT CALLED FOR INQUEST TO BE ATTENDED BY PATHOLO- GIST OF FAMILY'S CHOICE AND EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR SAFETY AND CONDITIONS OF ALL DETAINEES.

3. EVENTS AT TWO "COLORED" HIGH SCHOOLS, TRAFALGAR AND ALEXANDER SINTON, ON SEPT 3 HAVE LED TO PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY VARIOUS CHURCH AND TEACHERS' GROUPS DEPLORING EXCESSIVE POLIC VIOLENCE. IN BOTH CASES POLICE ALLEGEDLY ENTERED SCHOOL GROUNDS TO DISPERSE STUDENT GATHERINGS AND BEGAN FIRING TEAR GAS AND BIRDSHOT. AS STUDENTS FLED INTO CLASSROOM BUILDINGS THEY WERE REPORTEDLY PURSUED BY POLICE

FIRING TEAR GAS AND USING BATONS. WHEN TEACHERS ATTEMPTED TO FORM STUDENTS INTO SMALL GROUPS TO LEAVE SHCOOL. GROUPS WERE REPORTEDLY ATTACKED BY POLICE IN STREETS OUTSIDE. THERE WERE VARIOUS REPORTS OF FLEEING STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS WHOHADCOME TO FETCH CHILDREN BEING STRUCK BY POLICE. PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY HELD MEETING SEPT 6 AND ISSUED STATEMENT ASKING AUTHORITIES TO CONSIDE EIGHT "QUESTIONS" INCLUD- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ING WHETHER ADEQUATE TIME ALLOWED FOR ORDERLY DISPERSAL; WAS USE OF TEAR GAS AND CLUBS BEING MINIMIZED; WHETHER FALLEN AND FLEEING DEMONSTRATORS BEING CLUBBED UNNECESSARILY; WHETHER INNOCENT PEOPLE BEING ASSAULTED AND IF ARMS BEING USED ONLY IN LAST RESORT FOR SELF-DEFENCE. POLICE COMMISSIONER IN TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH PRESS REPORTEDLY DENIED THAT POLICE WERE USING EXCESSIVE FORCE. END UNCLASSIFIED

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

COMMENT: CONGEN OFF DISCUSSED SITUATION AT ALEXANDER SINTON
WITH ONE PARENT (MEDICAL DOCTOR) WHO WENT TO SCHOOL TO PICK UP
HIS DAUGHTER AND WAS CAUGHT UP IN MELEE. HIS DESCRIPTION
OF EVENTS REFLECTED INTENSE BITTERNESS AND RESENTMENT TOWARD
POLICE. OF INTEREST WAS HIS ASSERTION THAT POLICE ACTIONS
HAVE OUTRAGED MANY PARENTS AND TEACHERS AND CREATED CONSIDER-
ABLE SYMPATHY AMONG THOSE WHO PREVIOUSLY OPPOSED STUDENT
DEMONSTRATIONS. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
WHITE

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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